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A  
L E T T E R  
to  
HENRY FLOOD, Esq.  
ON THE  
PRESENT STATE  
OF  
REPRESENTATION IN IRELAND,

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*Pro re pauca loquar.*

VIRG.

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ALFRED

WILLIAM



REPRESENTATION



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## LETTER, &c.

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**I**VERY readily admit, that appeals to the people at large ought not to be made frequently, or on slight occasions. The bulk of every community, destined to a life of action, not of speculation, are necessarily obliged to confine their time and their exertions to the support of human life

But, Sir, this rule, or rather this exception to a general rule, cannot, it is presumed, be carried to any extent. It seems essentially requisite to the existence of all free states, that the people be consulted on every important occasion: and however frequently urged as an objection, that the common people are ignorant, it cannot be allowed to have weight. The general principles of liberty and of law are as obvious to the understanding as those of religion: and it is equally clear to me, that the principles and design both of religion and liberty

are suited to the comprehension, so surely as they were designed for the happiness, of mankind. Why men have not availed themselves of an easy-acquired knowledge to obtain and secure their freedom, I can no more account for, than why a religion, so confessedly calculated for their happiness, has not been more extended. In both, whatever concerns their duty is of clear and easy apprehension. Besides, by consulting the people frequently they acquire an habit of thinking on political subjects, which will lead them to act with propriety, and to determine with justness. That they are generally right in their determinations, must, I think, be confessed: Both history and daily observation confirm the fact. Nay---instances are not wanting where the people have changed a rigid maxim of justice into a sentence of equity. You remember, Sir, that Cicero during his office of Consulate discovered the conspiracy of Catiline, which threatened the republic with ruin. The conjuncture required address, as well as an instant remedy; and this was compleatly effected by the death of some of the criminals. On this occasion Cæsar and other enemies of Cicero accused him for putting citizens to death contrary to the laws of Rome, and before sentence had been passed on them, and the faction prevailed so far as to have him banished. But the people afterwards, attending to the danger the republic had escaped, and to the timely interposition of Cicero, declared that the law ought not be applied to the fact, and instead of condemning, decreed him the glorious title of Father of his Country.

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In the story which is related of Themistocles, we have a strong proof that the body of the people can act conformable to the most exact rules of justice; though it militate against their own interest. Themistocles had in a public oration declared he had a scheme which would be highly useful, but which he could not mention publicly. The Athenians ordered him to report it to Aristides, who gave it as his opinion "that nothing" was more advantageous, yet nothing more unjust." On which the Athenians, without knowing or enquiring further, commanded Themistocles to desist from his intention. What a remarkable decision from men influenced only by a moral sense, without an atom of religion! To facts allow me to add an opinion of some authority. Where the right of making laws resides with the people, public virtue, says Blackstone, is more likely to be found, than in any other government; the people are best at directing the end of a law; and we have had a very illustrious example lately, of a whole nation rising from an oppressed state, by slow and progressive stages, to the establishment of her rights. The people fought for no more than their rights, and shewed a determination to obtain them; yet the moderation and firmness by which that great revolution was effected will remain a standing monument of popular wisdom to after ages. When I say the rights of Ireland are established, I can mean it only so far, as that establishment depended on an extrinsic jurisdiction. There remains one other grievance, most intolerably oppressive, the removal of which is absolutely necessary to our perfect freedom. In this subject I cannot

cannot be mistaken---it is the inadequate representation of the people.

It appears unnecessary, Sir, to enter into an historical detail concerning the time Representation first appeared in our constitution, or who were its constituent members. Modern writers are in these enquiries too much influenced, I had almost said corrupted, by the lawyers, who must have precedent for every blessing they enjoy, and who by faint similitudes, and forced inductions mold antiquity to their own visionary schemes. But it is not now as in rude ages when authority triumphed over reason. If Representation has all the advantages allowed it, how useless is it to recur to ages of obscurity and confusion to enquire its origin; how superfluous to examine whether the institution be derived from accident or wisdom. Few human institutions in general have been the result of wise deliberation. They have been accidentally discovered, or have originated in the natural sagacity of men, wholly unacquainted with philosophy.

Whether the House of Commons represent the persons or property of the nation is also a much agitated question; on which as on most speculative questions every man has formed an opinion of his own. That under the idea of a personal Representation, that of property is included, seems a clear position. Where all are Represented, the wealthy must necessarily share in the benefit. Yet the House of Commons were surely possessed with the opinion, that they Represented the wealth only of the kingdom, when they passed a law, which af-  
fixed



fixed a certain ratio of property to the Electors for counties, and *their* Representatives, as well as those of boroughs. A law wholly repugnant to the genuine principles of civil liberty; by which every man, who pays taxes in support of the State, and the lowest mechanic, whose trade, personal liberty, and religion are equally dear to him, ought to be as truly Represented, as the wealthiest citizen.

Leaving then the antiquity of the House of Commons as not suiting our present design, let us push our enquiries into the present state of the national Representation. The most obvious and striking reflection on this subject is the small proportion which the county Representatives bear to those of boroughs. Of three hundred members of the House of Commons only sixty-four are returned by counties, the remaining two hundred and thirty-six are, if we except a few large cities and free towns, returned by a very small number of Electors. The state of freedom in the large cities will not bear controversy, but much might be admitted respecting the number of free towns and corporations, which vary considerably in their privileges and state of freedom. In some towns, which have the prescriptive privilege of giving every protestant householder a vote, the people would be free, were that freedom not destroyed, or at least much weakened by the influence, which the dominion of the soil gives to one man. Therefore no potwalloping town, the soil of which is the property of an individual, can possibly be free. In several boroughs, as Newtown, Charlemont, Carlingford and Monaghan, the soil and the Representation are in different

ferent hands. Monaghan and Newtown have in each only a single resident Elector. Charlemont has not one. While to encrease our political misfortunes, and to shew his contempt for the Representative interest, the Bishop of Clogher makes his own servants, with perhaps his Chaplain at their head, sign the return of members for that city, who have as much authority in the national assembly, as those who represent either the counties of Cork or Down. Several boroughs have both freemen and burgesses, yet the latter only vote, as Carlingford, Monaghan, and I believe Colerain. In Dundalk the charter allows both to vote. But there are confessedly above one hundred boroughs, having by charter twelve burgesses, who vote: and as seven of these, being a majority of 12, can return two members, above two hundred members from half that number of boroughs, are returned by seven hundred Electors; yet this is not the extent of the evil: For the majority of Electors in each corporation, being under the influence or command of one man, and in a few cases several of the boroughs belonging to one, it might be asserted without offence to truth, that two hundred Representatives are sent into Parliament by less than one hundred Electors: These facts are too striking to need any comment. They plainly shew that by an artful distribution of places, pensions and titles, a majority in Parliament can be always obtained by corrupt rulers; and experience has too fatally verified the assertion.

This, Sir, being the state of the national representation, it becomes a subject of serious animadversion how this defect in our constitution can be removed.



ingred. A very celebrated writer questions the right of disfranchising those boroughs; but Junius can only mean that the right of disfranchisement is not lodged in the House of Commons: it would indeed be an extraordinary stretch of power in the Commons to disfranchise those votes to which they owe their political existence—even in a case of notorious bribery their exercise of this power may be doubted. The legal mode of proceeding here, is certainly by a quo warranto from the King's Bench, to enquire whether they have kept up to their charter; and if convicted by a jury, the corporation may be dissolved. London is in every such case excepted, as by the Bill of Rights its charter never can be forfeited on any pretence whatever. But if the boroughs be an evil in the Constitution; a power should be discovered, which can remove it. It is equally a political as well as physical truth, that if the unsound parts of a body be not extirpated, the whole will be corrupted: corruption; like a putrid ferment; assimilates every thing to its own nature. The House of Commons, then; as possessing only a delegated power, cannot deprive freemen of their votes. With still less propriety, can the executive power of the state, or the House of Lords; interfere or attempt the wished for alteration: It must be an act of the people at large, in whom alone original, undelegated power, and the exercise of it, is lodged. For with them lies the grievance; and in them lies the means of redress.

To all impressed with the justness of this opinion; it must be evident that the late applications of the

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people of England to their Commons, for a reform in their representation, was highly absurd: nor could they be disappointed at the success of their petitions. Much was said in answer to those petitions in the House of Commons, about preserving a venerable fabric from the rude hand of violence: that constitution which had been the work of ages, and the admiration of foreigners, it would be sacrilege to touch----with what charming consistency did this language come from men, who had maintained for many years a most complete system of corruption in the British government, and weakened that spirit of the constitution, on which alone its pre-eminence was founded.

Of that same boasted fabric, the English constitution, much admiration has been expressed. To the Saxons England is indebted for what is most valuable of it, as she owes to the Normans the best portion of her language. In point of antiquity, it merits little; for tho' records have established the existence of that most admired part, the House of Commons, in the reign of the third Henry; it is as certain that its different constituent powers were not accurately known before Charles the First. It seems rather to be one of those fine speculative systems, to which practice does not eventually correspond. On paper it has a beautiful appearance; tho' its credit, like that of the national funds, depends more on public opinion, than on intrinsic worth. A modern writer,\* reckoned too fond of declamation, has averred, that powers so opposite in principle, as those of the British constitution, must be perpetually jarring.

\* Author of Common Sense.



jarring. That respectable writer is, in general, very accurate in his reasoning, and there are a multitude of facts which support his idea. Why might it not however be in political, as in social life, where we find the truest harmony often result from the mutual intercourse of people, differing in age, sex, and sentiment? But the manners of the people of England are too much corrupted to expect a reform in their constitution, which requires a great share of public virtue both in the planning and execution. It were curious to trace the progress of manners in a society, which has gone through all the stages of civilization: For societies, like individuals, have particular traits in their character, by which they are distinguished. In England we find a faithful observance of this rule; her manners, like her ancestry, being of a mixed kind; it is German boorishness, with an awkward imitation of French politesse. In the military line, England affected to emulate and copy ancient Rome. Yet the Romans, while they despised commerce, preserved a consistency of manners throughout. They pretended not to possess, much less to possess exclusively, the more amiable virtues of generosity and humanity. They began with destroying and plundering, and ended, only changing terms, with being conquerors. Both states have boasted of their freedom. But generally speaking, it is not to any settled plan for the establishment of freedom, as to a happy combination of fortuitous events, that England owes to herself any enjoyment of that blessing.--- Where, Sir, can you find, was the fondness for liberty in those people, who suffered slavery to exist among them, until within these two centuries; and

when only within this century and a half, the several parts of its constitution were known and accurately defined? Where the Court of Star-Chamber, that great support of English tyranny, was allowed to exist from the most remote antiquity, with an authority not limited by any law or statute? Where a power of imprisoning, of exacting forced loans, of altering the customs, and erecting monopolies, was exercised and never once called in question, for a whole century prior to James the First? \* But whatever portion of public liberty England enjoyed, she holds it now by a very precarious tenure, enervated by a fatal luxury, debauched by undisguised venality: her great men contending for power, and all struggling for wealth. Her people appear to me, says an able advocate of despotism, † to think themselves in more danger of wanting money, than of losing their liberty. What a melancholy preface does such an observation afford! In the summit of their glory, the Romans were highly jealous of their liberty, but when corrupted, they required only *panem & circenses*. ‡ If the ages of virtue were not passed from England, she could not suffer a corrupt system to vitiate for years, every part of the state. A system advancing with gradual, though successive strides, to despotism; which Hume asserts to be her true *euthanasia*. Nor is the attempt new, though from a late revolution, the success may be doubtful. The mother filled up the intervals of her religious duties on her death-bed, by exhorting her son to persevere in the plan laid down to destroy the dawning of liberty in America,

\* Lord Kaimes and Hume.

† Taxation no Tyranny.

‡ Bread and public diversions.

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rica, and the remnant of it in Britain, and "George be steady," concluded the dying admonition.

That Ireland, Sir, possesses a large share of public virtue will be scarcely questioned by any, whose memory can take in but a moderate compass of time. Having freed herself from a foreign usurpation, it is strongly incumbent on her to begin and complete an internal reform, without which all her past exertions may pass for nothing. Many plans for a more equal and just Representation of the people will, it is presumed, be offered, none of which I could wish to see pass without some trial or notice. The scripture rule should here serve for a political one. To further the great work which is to finish our political redemption, the following scheme is submitted, with becoming deference, to public opinion. I hope, Sir, it may be found as easy to execute, as it is to comprehend.

*First*---let such boroughs as have few or no resident freemen or burgeses, the inhabitants of which have not consequently votes, respectfully memorial the House of Commons, that not being concerned in electing their members, they may be released from the unsubstantial privilege of being Represented in Parliament.

*Secondly*---let those potwalloping towns, the soil whereof is the property of an individual, be no longer allowed to send members to Parliament.--- But as this must be an act of the people at large,

*Thirdly*

*Thirdly*—let each county in full and solemn assembly, held by the Sheriff, or convened by a respectable number of freeholders, have a state of the boroughs or corporate towns in that county, laid before them. On this occasion they may release the boroughs in the *first* instance from sending members, or allow the Commons to do it. They ought to refuse the potwalloping boroughs of the *second* instance, the privilege of returning Representatives, and superadd the votes of the present Electors, to those of the county; by which means their privilege of voting is preserved. The people ought also to resolve, that in order to obviate those changes, which the lapse of time, and the fluctuation of property, are found to occasion in towns, the power of Representation should in future depend on the number of inhabitants: and that each town in the county, possessing three hundred inhabitants, and not fewer in number, shall send two members to the national assembly: who must be fairly elected by every man “of twelve months residency, and who has paid public taxes”. \* Further, they should declare their determination to adhere strictly to the statute I. Henry 5th, which by a law of Sir Edward Poynings, is, or ought to be in force here. This law enacts, that none shall be chosen Knights of the Shire, who were not resident in the county on the day the writ of summons was dated: nor any be chosen burgesses, but such as were citizens, or towns-men and freemen, and dwelling in the cities and towns where they were elected. But lastly, if such a final adjustment of the boroughs as could be

\* Constitutions of America.



be wished for does not take place, let the county send such a number of knights, as will effectually counteract the remaining borough influence of that county.

Of this plan I wish not to say much in recommendation. The principle on which it depends, is sufficiently obvious, and that at least cannot be combated. For who, Sir, can refuse a power and right in the people to alter a form of the Constitution, (however ancient) which, by departing from its original purpose, is become noxious, or to abrogate a power by which they are essentially injured? By the constitutions lately established in America, the people in the several provinces are called on to alter, revise, and amend their constitutions on stated occasions, and on no other principle can a state of freedom be supported. I am aware of the objection, that destroying the boroughs will injure private property. In point of weight, the objection scarcely deserves notice; but, being so commonly urged, it has some claim to an answer. I begin with admitting, that the *jura rerum*, or right of dominion, is the peculiar privilege of our constitution. It cannot be touched but by a consent expressed by the people, or those to whom they have transferred a power of taking it: nor can the house or field of a subject be taken, even for the public use, until the value as awarded by a jury, be allowed. But to every species of property as derived and secured by the positive institutions of society, an exclusive or personal right in boroughs is surely an exception. There is an essential good in securing the property of the subject, because it tends to promote his happiness.

piness, and ultimately that of the community; and on that account the means and final cause of obtaining it, are both just and laudable. Neither does its possession injure any other. But what is the effect of this property in boroughs? To poison the source of legislation, and rob the community of its dearest rights. The laws of society secure to the subject, the exclusive enjoyment of his personal fortune and estate; but where are the laws for securing the merchandize of boroughs? In vain do we look for cases in the law books. These oracles, though as clear and explicit on every judicial case as *their* language will admit, gave no response to the question; the law cannot give its sanction to a public robbery, under the dubious claim of private right. What shall we say then?—That as a perfectly free Representation is essential to liberty, so it must be admitted a solecism in politics, that the legislature of a nation should be private property—that, as in law, personal compassion cannot be opposed to legal system; with still more injustice can men be allowed an interest so injurious to society. The excentricity of the case makes it difficult to adduce instances in point; yet some I believe not dissimilar may be found, where a legislature has destroyed a property incompatible with the public good. In Scotland the remains of the feudal constitution continued long after its disappearance throughout the rest of Europe. The people were in great vassalage to the Nobles, and as strict feudatories were considered and held to be their absolute property; yet both that power and property were for ever abolished by two acts of the British Parliament, twentieth Geo. 2. c. 43 and 50. It is also



an established principle in law, that a property in negroes is destroyed the moment they land in these kingdoms : and though a right of service continues, as being a simple compact, they are secured in their persons and property.\*

Another objection opposed to this act of the people is, that it invades the King's prerogative. But few, I believe, will refuse to agree with me, that the King's interference, and choosing the number of the people's Representatives, was an original defect in the Constitution, to which they may now therefore apportion, with due discretion, and adequate remedy. For many years the number of the Commons was in a fluctuating state, as they gave a power to the Crown, to summon Burgesses from the most flourishing trading towns, by which new members were added from time to time. But surely no authority given by a delegated power, or even by the people themselves, can preclude a power of revocation : And if that authority be abused, or kept up only to lessen the independence of the people's Representatives, no considerations should deter them from recalling it. When Charles the First had a violent desire to have a particular man chosen Speaker of the Commons, he could not get him sent into Parliament from any part of England.--- With what hasty strides has that abuse of returning members, reached our age? Such an attempt to frighten us about invading the prerogative, and withdrawing the allegiance of the subject, ought to remember, that the obligation between Sovereign

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\* Blackstone.

and Subject is reciprocal. Nay, it is of greater force with the former. It is a duty of the Sovereign to pay the most unreserved attention to the interests of the community, and even to conduct himself by the opinion of the governed. To these he is bound by the form and spirit of the Constitution, by the rules of natural justice, and the fundamental laws of society; but the allegiance of the Subject is only of imperfect, or conditional obligation. His obedience unquestionably depends on the faithful adherence of the Sovereign to his engagements. Puffendorf gives us the oath of allegiance which the people of Arragan swore to their prince. We, say they, who have as much power as you, make you our king, upon condition that you maintain inviolably our rights and liberties---otherwise not. And so says every engagement, whether specific or implied, between people and prince: For never can the interest of any man be of equivalent force with the rights of a nation.

Having thus, Sir, I hope, fully considered those two chief objections, is any thing I would ask further necessary to enforce the object of this address? or is a legal opinion wanted? A learned commentator has long since given one: Blackstone, after admitting the English Constitution to be not so perfect as he describes it, allows also---that a more complete Representation of the People, was much to be wished for ---

But lo! the genius of Ireland appears, to address her people.

To



To forbear addressing you on the present occasion, would argue a neglect of duty in your most important concerns. Experience has amply proved to you, that forbearance, as it arises from a voluntary suspension of the active faculties, is often criminal, and to this I am a suffering witness. Long was I condemned to bear a state of inaction and torpor. Though not deficient in those powers, which lead to wealth and wisdom, to industry and science I found myself cramped with I know not what of weight; I perceived a gradual resolution unnerve my whole frame. When called on, I suffered a momentary vigil; I waked only to behold the impotent efforts of my sons.

The morning at length came, in which I was to awake to action and life, to liberty and honor. My sons appeared before me in new and martial apparel, and forcibly cutting, what now proved to be dishonorable chains that bound me, they exhorted me to arise and support their honest exertions. The call was two importunate, and the occasion two glorious, to refuse an instant acquiescence. The idea of restoring to my people their long withheld rights, raised in me a kind of enthusiastic ardor, I had never before experienced. To advance was honorable; to retreat was infamy. The time, the mode, and other concurring circumstances, allowed me to predict the event with an infallible certainty. Nor was the cause unworthy the interference of an agency superior to man. A nation struggling for their rights, as natural and social beings, must be highly acceptable to a Supreme Governor, who has ordained freedom and happiness to all his creatures. The success why need I recite? It is en-

graven on the hearts of Irishmen, I hope never to be erased. The short time which intervened between your incipient and final emancipation from foreign usurpation, I revolve on with the most heart-felt and secret delight. To the vigorous exertions of my sons, am I raised to an equal share of honour among the nations. From a state of debasement I am called to dignity; from slavery to freedom. With what silent admiration will future times look on the recent transactions of Ireland, when the historic page shall convey, with dignity and with truth, those important events. And as the stream of time transmits with a smooth and equable motion the late revolution to a distant age, the developement of some few circumstances, to which we now are strangers, will prove such an accession of pleasure, as to make it fall with double force on the minds of posterity.

One event, and one only, is wanting to secure perfect freedom to my people. They are freed from an odious foreign tyranny, but they have that many headed monster to subdue at home. The same wisdom, which made it convenient that the community be represented by a few; makes it indispensably requisite that that Representation be as perfect as possible, that thereby as in a mirror, the people's sentiments might be faithfully exhibited.—Ye men of Ireland let me exhort you in my turn, to devise some method, whereby you may improve the present state of your Representation. Your exertions have been transcendantly great; but suited to the tone of those exertions, must they undergo a proportionate degree of relaxation. And without pursuing this necessary improvement of your constitution, you will



will have a corrupt legislation perpetually hanging over you, the same legislation which has proved the source of all your evils. Without it, you have suffered only a change of tyrants, † a domestic instead of a foreign one: the latter you have effectually crushed; the former will remain, and remain to prove, that the social state, without freedom, is a curse to mankind. But if society be nothing more than the union of a number of persons, for their common advantage--- ‡ society has an undoubted right, a right derived from Heaven itself, to promote that common advantage by every human means.

Attend not therefore to such as tell you, it would be sacrilege to touch what time has sanctified, and that you have no precedents to act by. Can time sanctify oppression? are you to wait your being ruined by precedent? will you not rather abolish an acknowledged evil? how absurd to suppose the establishment of human rights, like the frivolous subtleties of legal dialect, can depend on the doubtful conveyance, or interpretation of musty parchment!

In a neighbouring nation several ineffectual efforts have been made to check a corruption, which has long had a direct influence on the Representatives of the people, and pervaded all orders of the State. But the genius of England is immersed in unrestrained luxury. Ever unhappily taking the wrong road to happiness, she mistook wealth for virtue, and a gloomy severe wisdom for happiness---uncon-

† Combatans seulement pour le choix des tyrans—Cornille.

‡ Elémens du droit naturel.

scious that it is with nations as with individuals; among whom we find, that neither wealth, nor superiority of understanding, make a man a more useful member of society, or more happy in himself. Of the substance of her constitution she was neglectful, while the form remained: pleased with the contour instead of a perfect figure; and ever more inclined to extend her commerce and her territory; than encourage population, or improve her constitution.

But from that soil which destroys the seed of every virtue in its growth, I again turn my eyes on a people, yet undebauched by luxury. To you who are active and steady in the love of liberty and of your country, small are the incentives necessary to urge your continuance in that line, which has proved so beneficial to the nation. Continue to be the future guardians, as you have been the restorers of your country's rights: and as nations ought to measure their existence, not by years, but by the great and virtuous acts they have done, may you continue to signalize your arms by every act, which can ennoble, can adorn society. In a moral view Volunteering will have the noblest effects. The worthy it confirms in good habits: immoral people it will reclaim. There is a principle of imitation in mankind, which leads men involuntarily to imitate, and seize the living manners of those they confocate with. Let therefore neither menaces nor allurements induce you to lay aside your arms. To a government founded in public virtue, and determined to preserve to the people their civil and religious freedom, no consideration could be more grateful



grateful or acceptable, than that which assures the guardians of the common weal of the instant and active support of a whole people, disciplined and ready for the field. Far from being an object of terror, it would have claim to the highest regard. It must appear terrific to unjust and wicked governors only; to such as it would be proper to keep in awe. 'Tis absurd to suppose the people would invade their own rights, or disturb that government, which gives the fullest security to their persons and property.

Cultivate a close intimacy with brethren of every denomination, the Roman Catholics not excepted. As good citizens these have obtained a proper encouragement from the State, which their long and peaceable behaviour very justly entitled them to. They have exchanged certainty in the place of doubt, and a legal security for a precarious connivance. As men they are entitled to a social intercourse with us. It is by this society that the rust of ignorance and of prejudice between sects, is worn off; and of vice also, in so far as it depends on habit, rather than principle; and it is by this society that friendship and all the social affections are kept alive and vigorous. With their religion, the State ought to have no concern, much less can particular connexions. Religion unites moral agents with their maker, and has regard to him alone.

May my people, with whom the necessity exists, practise that industry, which can enable them to answer the stated demands of rent, with the most punctual exactness. 'Tis an absurd and wicked principle

eible, that tenants are obliged to vote with their landlords. It destroys that free agency, on which all human actions are founded; strictly speaking, the greater obligation lies with the landlord: the landholder is under none, and a regular payment of rent gives him the power, as surely as he has the right of being independent. Contrarily, a want of industry makes him unable to fulfil his engagements, and he becomes dependent on his landlord --- such cannot call themselves freeholders. The landed interest in general has never wanted the inclination to keep up that spirit of feudal subjection, which so long oppressed and disgraced humanity; with this difference only, that improving upon it, both rents and service are now required: whereas anciently the former was accepted in lieu of military service. There is an aristocratic spirit running thro' them, to be corrected only by the manners of the people, which whatever be the form of government, should be strictly Republican.

While yet the love of your country continues the ruling passion, let me conjure you to awaken every effort to counteract or remove that baleful influence, which exists among your Representatives. This can be only done by lessening the number of boroughs, by proportioning the number of Representatives to those of the Electors, and as one consequence, by encreasing the number of your county Representatives. You may certainly send any convenient number you please to the House of Commons: for where is the power, or where the just authority to prevent you? a writer of great merit in pure scientific literature, but of little in political science



science, admits a doubt that the crown cannot give, or at least increase the number of the Commons: and this is one of the few political maxims, in which you may safely join issue with him. But no doubt can be entertained as to your modelling and ascertaining the number of the House of Commons, according to pleasure: for it is strictly speaking, your indefeasible property; from you is their boasted omnipotence derived, and by you only can that borrowed pre-eminence be annihilated.

Should this great internal reform take place, of which no moral doubt can be entertained, I can foresee the most beneficial consequences to my people. Among the first of them, the Assembly of their Parliament, biennial, or if they please, by annual custom, will stand foremost: A second, and no small advantage, must arise, from a severe and attentive revision of the Penal Laws, which are at present a disgrace to equal justice, and a public satire on humanity.

So sure then, as an action presupposes an agent, or an effect a cause; as certain may you be of a speedy and happy effect---provided you act with your usual prudence and spirit. Be temperate and be firm. A favoured son, to whom I have given both ability and zeal to serve you, is ready to mark out the line for your procedure. Him will I go before and lead, opposed to all the droptied honors of a corrupt state, to true honor and solid greatness. He it is, who lately rescued you, as far as human wisdom could, from a possible return to a state of bondage. 'Twas he that strengthened my connexion with liberty---a rightful, though a long

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estranged friend;—a friend by whose benevolent spirit, "broad and general," a large portion of political happiness was lately imparted to the inhabitants of a distant clime; where yet, after traversing and finally leaving the Old World, she will also decline—falling with the accelerated motion of descending bodies, and with humanity in her train, closing her descent in the West, by a long and eternal night. He led you, nothing loth, to assert and perpetuate your unequivocal rights. Call on him once more to perfect your Constitution.

Assure him of your determination to bring on the glorious work. His abilities are great: they hold a conspicuous niche in the temple of Fame, and will pass unrivalled to posterity. Yet shall your opinions add even to his arguments, solidity, even to his eloquence a brilliancy and force, that will convince the most timid, and awe the most corrupt into acquiescence. May my sons have, what their cause deservedly merits, the fullest success, and—

**LET ALL THE PEOPLE SAY, AMEN.**

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